

THE SATURDAY REVIEW

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SIXPENCE

IN THIS ISSUE, by special request, we have delved into some of our past numbers to produce for the edification of our readers a few of those "purple patches" which have brought fame to the *Saturday Review* in its long history of over eighty years. With such a variety of choice and with the necessary limitations of space it is impossible to do more than give a few extracts, but we think these will serve to show that the *Saturday Review* has every reason to be proud of the part it has played in providing the British public week by week over more than three-quarters of a century with a pleasing variety of excellent and stimulating articles and comments.

MERCHANT SHIPPING, as the last war abundantly proved, is a highly important element in our national defence, and it is a deplorable fact that our merchant tonnage to-day is 2,000,000 less than it was in 1914. Another grave feature of the merchant shipping situation is the one to which Sir James Lithgow referred in an address to the International Engineering Congress at the Empire Exhibition at Glasgow this week. This is that we are faced with a serious decline in our merchant shipbuilding industry, due not to any loss of skill or reputation in our shipbuilding yards, but largely to the fact that shipbuilding in other countries is extensively subsidised and that our existing policy, both economic and political, does not take sufficient account of the needs of our export trade and of the impossibility in existing conditions of maintaining our shipping on the scale required for a vast Empire. Sir James admitted that assistance amounting to approximately £4,000,000 had of late years been given to merchant shipping from the public purse, but he contrasted this assistance with the £200,000,000 devoted to the improvement of housing and the development of agriculture during the last decade. He rightly insisted that the claim of merchant shipbuilding to national recognition was incontestable, and it is to be hoped that his address will receive the attention it deserves and will awaken the Government to the necessity of taking early and effective measures to restore our at present dwindling mercantile marine to an adequate strength.

THE QUESTION OF naval blockade is always a delicate problem for British diplomacy; for it is the weapon which established the Empire and our attitude towards it is necessarily different from that of any other Power; for it is our primary assumption that we command the sea. Air power has clearly modified the conditions of blockade and as war unfortunately deals with facts not theories, legal definitions of the past have become a dead letter. In the old days a blockade was regarded as effective if it rendered approach to the enemy's port hazardous and in the Crimean War

this country effectually blockaded Riga at a distance of 120 miles. It would appear that General Franco has succeeded in making approach to the Government ports hazardous, since according to Mr. Noel-Baker, 21 people in British ships in Spanish waters have been killed and over 30 wounded. Yet there is no recognised blockade, though account is taken for the perils run by British ships and crews both in freight charges and pay. In the circumstances Mr. Chamberlain's attitude is logical and natural. On the one hand we believed that intervention may save Europe from a general conflagration and in any case we are bound to be cautious and mark time until we have repaired the gaps in our defences, due to those who were prominent in disarming this country and re-arming Germany and who to-day would have us throw the gauntlet into the face of every dictator. On the other hand, we are a law-abiding race and any modifications introduced into the international code concerning blockade might prove a terrible hindrance to us in case of war. The whole of aerial warfare requires systematic consideration and it would be madness to plunge wildly into a discussion of restrictions and prohibitions until a definite plan has been drawn up to safeguard our legitimate interests.

EMPIRE MIGRATION, we gather from a letter we publish on another page from Mr. J. Henderson Stewart, M.P., is to be the subject of yet another Conference, this time at the Empire Exhibition at Glasgow. It is an admirable subject for earnest, non-party discussion and the locality chosen for the Conference is eminently suitable. One may hope, too, that the Conference will have the effect of producing the "constructive action" which Mr. Henderson Stewart sorrowfully admits has hitherto not made its appearance either at Westminster or in the Dominions. At the moment Empire migration is in a sad way, none of the Dominions, with the exception of Australia, having shown any enthusiasm for embarking on even the old "assisted" plans. The trickle of emigrants to the outer Empire from this country is so small at present as to suggest that the old impulse to emigrate has largely vanished. The truth would appear to be that the inducements to emigrate are not what they were thirty or more years ago, and that the only way in which the outer portions of the Empire can attract emigrants to increase their inadequate populations is by offering better prospects to the newcomers. That means, of course, that the Dominion Governments must make a greater effort than they have done hitherto to develop the natural resources of their countries. If those "empty spaces" are ever to be filled, development must precede any schemes for fostering immigration to any of the Dominions.

Books of The Day

THE WAY TO PEACE

"IF YOU wish for peace," says the oft-quoted Latin tag, "you must prepare for war." The modern pacifist's answer to this aphorism is that to prepare for war is merely to ensure it coming; the only way to prevent war, he argues, is to refuse to fight. As to what is to happen to any nation or people that adopts this doctrine, that is not a matter that concerns the pacifist. They may lose their all, become slaves to those who use force against them, but they will have at least preserved their principles—for what they may be worth. Pacifism in the last resort means the triumph of ruthless militarism, of might over those disinclined to resist it, and it can hardly recommend itself to a nation that prizes its possessions and traditions and has no desire to have its way of life dictated to by pressure from without. It is for this reason that the British Government's decision to embark on a gigantic defensive programme has received the support of the nation at large. No one in this country, it can safely be said, is anxious for war; but the great majority of the British people realise to the full the dangers of the present international situation and see clearly that a country or an Empire insufficiently armed has no means of guaranteeing peace either for itself or for its neighbours.

A strong Britain and a strong Empire have become the slogan of the hour. But there are still those who doubt whether we are doing all that should be done to prevent war or to prepare ourselves for it should it come. Sir Edward Grigg is among these doubters and his little book "Britain Looks At Germany" (Nicholson and Watson, 5s.), is a plea for greater national unity and discipline. In the past—even in the Great War—he argues we have had time to make good our deficiencies during the course of a struggle. In any future war, owing to the menace from the air, we shall be deprived of the advantages of our former isolated position; there will be no interval for repairing omissions. Hence the need for a new discipline and for making good any obvious defects in our defensive arrangements.

Sir Edward, after pointing out the grave disparity between the First-line air strength of ourselves and that of Germany, insists that the time has come for an even more drastic acceleration of our air programmes than the Government is now undertaking. "Germany's first-line strength," he says, "may reach 8,000 (aeroplanes) in two years; the possibility is incontestable. We must therefore equal that figure. . . . We can do it; we must do it; and there is no need for alarm, if we set about doing it immediately." Mr. Chamberlain has told us that "a scheme for compulsory national registration in time of war, if the Government of the day should so decide, has been in existence for some years" and in a speech at Birmingham two months ago he referred to the possibilities of a voluntary register of service, welcoming the spirit underlying the proposal but

expressing the fear that it might cause disappointment "because many people would register for work for which there was no necessity or for which they were not qualified." Sir Edward, noting these statements, is still convinced that there ought to be instituted at once a Register of Citizens "for purposes of classification only." Though the making of the return, he suggests, should be compulsory, there would be no compulsion to service of any kind. The sole object would be "to make classification possible in advance of war, and so to avoid over-lapping, confusion, waste and perilous delay if war should come."

When once that classification is available, a very large proportion of the population will know on Government authority that their duty is not to volunteer for any special war-service but to continue in their peacetime avocations, because that is the best contribution they can make to national strength and security. The rest need only wait until an appeal is made in their locality for the war services that are still inadequately manned. The most suitable of the volunteers for each service can then be enrolled and the rest will know that they have only to look after their own homes.

This Register of Citizens would, Sir Edward contends, if thoroughly revised year after year, be of enormous value. It would serve to provide a continuity of organisation for essential war service. If we are to wait for a compulsory registration when war breaks out, there is bound to be, Sir Edward says, several weeks' delay in compiling it and "the first few weeks may very possibly be the period of decision; they will certainly be the period of greatest jeopardy." In addition to this register Sir Edward advocates compulsory citizen training for the young between the years of eighteen and twenty. The general purpose of this training he holds should be "to develop fitness, discipline and good fellowship," but a further special aim should be "some training for corporate action in all the forms required to make our civil population as immune as possible from the horrors of air bombardment." While, however, the citizen training should be mainly on broad non-military lines, "some proportion of the young men undergoing it should be allowed to volunteer for military training on the Swiss pattern." He would have the choice between military and non-military service left absolutely free, "so long as some form of social service is rendered on the threshold of manhood by the whole of British youth." And he asks, "is it beyond hope that Parliament should adopt as a non-party measure this reinforcement of our democratic ideals?"

All through his book Sir Edward is "looking at" Germany, not in any provocative manner, but as an example of the "passion for subordination to a cause." Finally, he stresses the point that "we are allowing a renewed belief in British decadence to become more prevalent than it ought to be and that is terribly dangerous." It is impossible not to feel sympathy with Sir Edward's desire for national unity over matters affecting the country's defence, and if some of his readers may be inclined to see in his proposals a disguised form of conscription, at least they ought to recognise the sincere and genuine patriotism which has gone to the writing of his book.

SIR JOHN SIMON

Mr. Bechhofer Roberts ("Ephesian") has been responsible for several interesting political biographies, some by no means wholly eulogistic. That devoted to the late Leader of the Conservative Party, for example, was directed largely towards dispelling the legendary atmosphere that the "sealed lips" statesman appeared to be so anxious to spread about himself. In his new biography of Sir John Simon (Robert Hale, illustrated, 12s. 6d.) Mr. Roberts has contented himself with an appreciative rather than critical account of his subject's political and legal career. That that career has been an exceedingly distinguished one, no one can deny. But while there is no reason to quarrel with Mr. Roberts' admirable manner in setting out its various notable achievements, sometimes the reader may be conscious of a little surprise that in this book he has so completely restrained his critical faculty. As Foreign Secretary from 1931 to 1935, Sir John was anything but a remarkable success. But Mr. Roberts endeavours to cover up his failures by telling us that "it was silly to reproach him for not being sufficiently Palmerstonian, sufficiently 'firm' towards other nations." Perhaps the truth is that Mr. Roberts, like other people, has found Sir John Simon something of a puzzle. He can realise the brilliance of the gifts with which nature has endowed Sir John; he can note his courage, his determination and his "warmly generous instincts." But, he ultimately confesses, "it is never easy to portray anybody so out of the common run as Simon." His final summing-up, too, suggests a certain elusiveness about Sir John Simon:

Simon's personality seems at times to have puzzled people. He certainly lacks picturesque faults: he has not the unabashed egotism of Mr. Lloyd George or the complacent simplicity of Lord Baldwin or the sometimes reckless dash of Mr. Winston Churchill When Sir Edward Carson said in 1908 that he really did not know what Simon's vices were, he was jocularly expressing a view which has pained cartoonists, music-hall comedians and bar-parlour politicians ever since. As a result we find that his critics are unable to put up much of a case against him.

When the Socialist Miss Ellen Wilkinson ("Nippy") to the House of Commons complains that he "reminds me of an arum lily"; when the Liberal Lady Oxford declares that "he has a lonely uneasy self; he has never given it any rope; he is as grudging to himself as he is generous to his friends"; when the Conservative Mr. Churchill suggests that "where he makes mistakes is not in the manner in which he conducts a (political) brief, but in his over-readiness to accept any brief tendered to him in the proper manner," it may be assumed that they have tried from their various points of view to say the worst they feel about him. Yet their complaints do not seem very substantial or true.

Miss Wilkinson's is rather pointless, for arum lilies presumably toil not, neither do they spin, whereas Simon has done both to some purpose. Lady Oxford comes perhaps a little nearer the mark when she speaks of his personal loneliness; this was true enough from 1901 to 1917, but since then it has ceased to be true. She is certainly right to speak of his generosity to others While as for Mr. Churchill's rebuke . . . this seems to be a new reading of the old error that Simon is a lawyer before everything else, a suggestion of political amorality which is contradicted, to mention only one example, by his war-time resignation over conscription.

GUINEA AND CAPE VERDE ISLANDS

The Portuguese colonies of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands represent a corner of the world about which little is ever heard. Mr. Archibald Lyall can, it seems, with some justice claim to be the first Englishman to write a book about them. And it is an eminently readable and instructive book, not inappropriately entitled "Black and White Make Brown" (Heinemann, with many illustrations and a map, 18s.). The title is a reference to the Cap-verdian mixture of races. "In the course of four centuries," writes Mr. Lyall, "the blood of the early colonists, Portuguese, Genoese and Moriscoes and Jews expelled from Europe, has blended to form a people with that of a dozen Guinea tribes, each differing from the others in physique, complexion and features as much as white races differ from each other. From the time of the buccaneers onwards, a dash of the blood of many other races was added to this human cocktail-shaker. As a consequence you will see in Cape Verde some of the most bestially ugly specimens of the human race to be found on the globe and at the same time some of the loveliest. On the whole I thought the mixture gave a good result." Rather different from most of the Cape Verde Islands is St. Vincent—"a completely desert island with a city of fifteen thousand people dumped on it . . . a sea-city, parasitic on the sea. There are no industries; there is no agriculture; the town lives or used to live (for of recent years it has barely existed) on coaling, smuggling, begging, ship's chandlery and prostitution." The plutocracy of the town is represented by the English colony of about forty-five individuals. Most of them work for the Western Telegraph or for one of the coal companies. Mr. Lyall dwells on the strategic possibilities of St. Vincent should at any time the Mediterranean be closed to our shipping. In that case he anticipates it might well become the Malta of a new sea route to the Indian Ocean and Australasia.

In Guinea Mr. Lyall was impressed with the contrast it presented with the Cape Verde Islands. While the Cape Verde Islands were bleak and wind-swept, bare, sterile, mountainous and poor, Guinea was steamy and stifling, luxuriant in vegetation, flat as a pancake and rich. Again, it had no homogeneous population such as the Cape Verde Islands boasted. It contained over a dozen entirely distinct nationalities differing in race, religion and language from each other. "Rebellious, savage, fever-ridden, without money, without order, without administration," was the Guinea of thirty years ago. But all this was changed with the arrival in 1912 of "a tough, soldierly little man with a great curling Hindenburg moustache." This was Captain Teixeira Pinto, "destined to be the Clive of Guinea." In two or three years, without the aid of a single extra soldier sent out from Portugal, Pinto proceeded to pacify the colony, and to-day the old warrior tribes in the north of Guinea are loyal and law-abiding subjects of Portugal, furnishing their due quota to the colony's volunteer force. French newspapers, at the time of Mr. Lyall's visit to Guinea, had been busy with stories of a German naval base in the

Bissagos Islands, which are part of the colony. Mr. Lyall could find nothing to justify these stories. "The most remarkable feature of the Bissagos naval base," he says, "is that the further you are from it the more you can see of it."

LITERARY REMINISCENCES

Mr. E. H. Lacon Watson has in the course of a long literary career written a number of meritorious novels and other books of a miscellaneous character and been brought into contact with many interesting figures in the literary world. He has been a publisher and a stockbroker and has also played his part in journalism and has acted as one of Reuter's correspondents during the Great War. One naturally, therefore, takes up his autobiography ("I Look Back Seventy Years," Eyre & Spottiswoode, 10s. 6d.) with high expectations as to the entertainment value of his reminiscences. Nor is one disappointed. Mr. Watson admits at the end of his book that he has enjoyed recalling old memories and his reader cannot fail to sense that enjoyment and to share in it, for all the quiet modesty with which Mr. Watson sets out the varied experiences of his seventy years' life. When this budding author came to London and settled down in Staple Inn in the 'nineties he had as one of his neighbours Festing Jones, the Boswell of Samuel Butler. Mr. Watson has much to tell us that is new about the Butler-Jones ménage and also about the many distinguished writers whose acquaintance then or later he began to make such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Anthony Hope, Charles Garvice, W. J. Locke, Arnold Bennett, H. A. Vachell and Owen Seaman. When war broke out Mr. Watson served first as a clerk in the Admiralty and then successively as reader of letters in the Postal Censorship and as Travelling Censor from London to Folkestone. He next worked for a time in Reuter's London Office and was finally despatched as a Special Correspondent in turn to Italy, France, Flanders and Cologne, being the only Press representative to accompany King George V on his "Victory Tour" round the battlefields. All these experiences find their due record in Mr. Watson's chronicle, and he has also some sound "last reflections" to offer concerning the difficulties and trials of a literary life. The first eighty pages of his book are concerned with giving us vivid and interesting pictures of his early life, at Winchester and Cambridge and as a schoolmaster. Altogether a book to be recommended for leisured and pleasurable reading.

THE ANGLER'S ENGLAND

The Seeley Service series of volumes on the "English Scene" delightfully portray the many aspects of it, and one is glad to welcome another addition to the series, this time "The Angler's England" (8s. 6d.). In the competent hands of Mr. Patrick Chalmers every angler could be sure that his particular English scene would be certain to have its praises properly sung and that it would not suffer by comparison with other

"scenes." And whether the reader be angler or not, he has in this book much to charm him, so pleasantly and adroitly does Mr. Chalmers depict this England in prose and verse, out of his own experience, by the aid of literature and with many a good anecdote. Will Shakespeare, he shows by copious quotation, was a follower of the rod even if he had not acquired all the modern arts of angling. And, of course, from Izaak Walton up to the present day the angler can boast other great representatives in literature. There is one strange omission which Mr. Chalmers duly points out: the classic angling novel still remains to be written. And why should not Mr. Chalmers try his hand at it? He has all the specialist's knowledge as this book amply reveals on the arts of angling trout, "coarse fish," salmon and sea-trout.

NEW NOVELS TO READ

Limits of space forbid more than a mere mention of the best of the new novels. These are:

"Ancestral Tablet," by Kathleen Wallace (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.).

"The Gentle Phoenix," by Dorothy Wright (Heinemann).

"Hollow Sea," by James Hanley (John Lane, 10s. 6d.).

"The Survivors," by René Béhaine (translated, Allen & Unwin).

"Birthday Party," by C. H. B. Kitchin (Constable).

"Portrait of a Scoundrel," by Eden Phillpotts (Murray).

"The Dream Prevails," by Maud Diver (Murray).

"The Serpent and the Dove," by Norman Danny (John Lane).

"The Soul of Cezar Azan," by Alun Llewellyn (Arthur Barker).

"Fanya," a Gypsy novel, by Gypsy Putulengro (Methuen).

"Highly Explosive," by Nelson Mapple (Hurst & Blackett).

"The Great Insurance Murders," by Milton Propper (Harrap).

OTHER NEW BOOKS

"Arms and the Covenant" (Speeches by Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill), compiled by Randolph Churchill (Harrap, 18s.).

"Free Lance," by E. Alexander Powell (Harrap, illustrated, 10s. 6d.).

"The Witnesses," by Thomas Hennell (Illustrated with drawings by author, Peter Davies, 8s. 6d.).

"Backwoods to Lake Como," by Loftus Wigram (Peter Davies).

"The Yachtsman's Week-end Book," by John Irving and Douglas Service (Seeley Service, 8s. 6d.).

"Lost London," by ex-Det.-Sergt. B. Leeson (Stanley Paul Treasure Library, 3s. 6d.).

Your Investments

AN AUTUMN REVIVAL?

SOUND judges in the City are discussing the prospects of an autumn trade revival—they are too cautious to prophesy. In these days of political scares international news is always likely to upset calculations, but business must pursue its normal course if we are to pay for Defence. Recent declines in commodity prices have induced manufacturers to carry the minimum of raw material stocks and last year's accumulations are still satisfying their needs. But there are signs that small purchases of necessary raw materials are being made to prevent stocks from shrinking beyond danger point and this is an important factor in revival. When the normal autumn revival sets in, be it even below the usual level, commodities are likely to reflect the effects of this tendency and then prices will respond.

If America in the meantime should join in the industrial revival which may be expected to follow the setback of the past twelve months, the movement will gather substantial force. Securities are at such a low level that their reaction to a commodity price rise might well be spectacular and especially in such directions as copper-mining and rubber shares.

ARMAMENTS AND INDUSTRY

It has been plainly stated from official quarters that the peak of re-armament expenditure will not be reached until 1940 and then the Government's programme must depend upon the course of political events. But on this 1940 basis there seems no reason for present prices of shares of companies directly dependent upon armament work for a large part of their income. In this class aircraft issues are outstanding. The yields of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on Hawker-Siddeley and nearly 7 per cent. on Fairey Aviation seem particularly generous and the former seem well-placed for a recovery. The 5s. shares at 26s. 6d. have come back since the recent capital placing and by reason that substantial profits have already been taken after the recent rise. When the next buying movement of any size in industrials occurs there should be a rise in these shares to at least 30s. Bristol Aeroplane 10s. shares at 53s. yield only $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., but here there is the chance of fresh capital on bonus terms and the shares look highly attractive.

MACHINE TOOL ISSUES

Despite the fact that there has been no slackening of orders among the machine tool manufacturers, there are some extraordinary yields in this section. Butlers Machine Tools at 9s. 3d. for the 5s. shares give $7\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. and the 5s. shares of Churchill Machine Tools at 21s. give the almost

fantastic return of $9\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. Banister Walton return nearly $11\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and there are others in this class. The companies are fairly recent registrations but have already proved themselves on present demands and there seems no reason why share prices should already discount a disappearance of their trading activity which is not even in sight.

FISHER AND LUDLOW

An extraordinary example of the sudden distrust for the engineering trade is given by the 10s. units of Fisher and Ludlow which have fallen to 21s. 3d. as against 50s. 3d. at one time last year. The company manufactures metal pressings and stampings for the engineering, motor and shipping industries and for the last two years has paid 15 per cent. with a 5 per cent. bonus. Last year this was covered by earnings of $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and reserve was strengthened by various allocations totalling £261,000. General reserve at nearly £500,000 compares with total capital of £700,000. Unless it is felt that the motor-car industry is going completely to fade away to 1932 levels the units are much undervalued. Shrewd "inside" judges believe them to be worth 30s. and their present yield of well over 9 per cent. is very attractive. Even if the bonus were omitted for the current year, units would return over 7 per cent.

TRANSPORT "C" STOCK

The argument as to what payment is likely to be made on London Transport "C" stock this year has subsided recently but it should be revived again soon. The stock is now down to 74 giving a $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. return on the basis of last year's $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. payment. The standard dividend of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. has not yet been paid but if it is not forthcoming this year the question arises of the possibility of application being made for a receivership under the Act. So far this has not been taken very seriously, but many in the City believe that in order to avoid the difficulties of such a situation the Board will make a special effort to bring the dividend up to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In any event the stock is low-priced at the moment as an investment, and it has the added attraction of the likelihood of receiving more attention at higher prices in the next few months.

WHITELEY'S POSITION

A curious position arises in regard to the 25 per cent. ordinary stock of Wm. Whiteley's, the Bayswater stores, the £1 units of which are now priced around 25s. 6d. The dividend is guaranteed until February, 1942, by Selfridges, and after that date there is little prospect of Whiteley's shareholders receiving such a high return which is not earned by the business. But with $3\frac{3}{4}$ years to run, the guaranteed dividend amounts to a net sum of rather over half the present market value of the £1 units. Obviously these will have some capital value in the future and the market is rather looking for some sort of conversion offer as the time approaches for the guarantee to run off. These are, therefore, interesting speculative attractions.

Letters to the Editor

EMPIRE MIGRATION

Sir,—Eight months ago the Guildhall in London, was the scene of a Conference to discuss the economic future of the Empire. It met under the patronage of the Lord Mayor, and its proceedings attracted immediate and sympathetic attention both here and overseas. It was the clear view then that in a world of acquisitive dictatorships a half-filled British Empire was asking for trouble; and the Conference came to certain decisions for the organisation of swifter migration and development. These proposals were later conveyed to the Prime Minister.

So far, unfortunately, no constructive action has followed, either at Westminster or in the Dominions, and a further Conference has been called to rally public opinion, this time at the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow. No better place could have been chosen for an exhortation to Imperial endeavour, for whatever Governments may think, the millions now crowding into Bellahouston Park, make clear the determination of the man-in-the-street to uphold and strengthen the Empire of which he is so proud.

There will be no idle flag-wagging at Glasgow: the delegates have a sterner task before them. Nor will this be any party demonstration: leaders of all three political parties and other prominent men in the State will take part in the discussions.

Our object is to rouse the Governments of the Empire to a sense of duty. We dare not risk further delay in peopling the empty spaces and exploiting the opportunities that lie before us. For if we fail, others may relieve us of the responsibility.

For obvious reasons attendance at the Conference must be limited, but the Organising Committee will welcome expressions of interest and support from whatever quarter they may come. Communications should be addressed either to me or to the Secretary of the Conference at 11, Grenville-place, London, S.W.7.

J. HENDERSON STEWART, M.P.
Vice-Chairman,
Empire Development Conference.

TAXATION OF PETROL

Sir,—The concluding stages of the Finance Bill will shortly be entered into, and I think it is as well that the public should be aware of certain features in connection with the proposed increase in the tax on petrol and on heavy oils used as fuel in road transport.

Let it be remembered first of all that the cost of transporting goods in this country amounts to very nearly £300,000,000 per annum. Many of the industries which pay this money for the carriage of goods are engaged in export trade meeting keen competition from our competitors, and therefore any increase in the cost of their production is an additional handicap in the attempt to secure foreign markets, and to provide employment here at home.

Let us see what this taxation actually amounts to in practice. A 6-ton lorry in use all the year round will pay in taxation approximately £250 for the year. A 10-ton lorry about £430 per annum. These burdens have to be borne, and they are naturally passed on to the user of transport, before any of the normal overhead charges such as initial cost, upkeep, garage, wages, etc., have been met at all. The proposed tax, and the illustration I am giving concerns petrol using vehicles, will mean an additional burden in the case of the smaller vehicle of about £21 per annum, and in the case of the larger vehicle about £34 per annum. This will give some picture of the immense burden that is being imposed by the taxation of fuel and the high rate of licence duty of transport by road to the infinite hurt of the industry of the country as a whole.

The Finance Bill contains a proposal that the preference to be given to those concerned in producing fuel from coal shall be at such a rate that this high level of taxation is to be maintained for twelve years. That is to say at the rate of 8d. per gallon. The excuse for the progressive additions to the taxation of motor fuel has been that in spite of taxation the consumption increases. Therefore, so runs the argument, the taxation can be borne without inconvenience. This is wholly a false line of argument. The increase in consumption is not a proof that the burden can be borne with ease, but rather that it is a necessity for commerce and industry to make use of this form of transport in spite of the heavy cost involved.

There might be some justification for taxation at this level if the products of it were used as two Parliamentary enactments have laid down that it should be used—solely for road improvements. In truth the proportion of the money raised by the taxation of the motor industry spent upon the improvement of the roads, which is so urgently needed, is progressively less.

Naturally the increase now to be borne by users of mechanical road transport is very much resented, particularly as there is a differentiation between them and other forms of transport who may use the same fuel.

What, however, I wish to draw the attention of the public to is the enormous handicap that is placed upon the industrial life of the country by this heavy imposition on what is becoming more and more its main and most convenient method of transport.

H. E. CRAWFURD.

Bush House, Aldwych,
London, W.C.2.

Voices of the Past

From the Files

The Saturday Review was born on November 3, 1855, when the Crimean War was still the centre of public attention, and its programme and purposes were modestly expressed under the heading of Advertisements.

THE Prospectus of a New Periodical is usually, for most practical purposes superfluous; for although it may appear less than respectful to the public, in those who ask its confidence, to make no professions at all, it is certain that a literary experiment can better describe itself by its performances than by its promises. The character of a Review or of a Newspaper is developed rather by its working than by any formal announcement of the anticipations or even the plans of its projectors. All, therefore, that the conductors of the SATURDAY REVIEW can at present do is to state certain principles of journalism which they desire to realise and embody in their new publication.

Their immediate motive in coming before the public is furnished by the impetus given to periodical literature by the repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Act. The object of that measure is to enable those who assume the responsibility of providing the public with accessible information, or instruction, to do so without the cumbrous and expensive machinery hitherto inseparable from a newspaper. What the recent Act has done is, however, not so much to make news and intelligence — commercially speaking — cheaper, as to remove the restrictions and difficulties heretofore incidental to the publication of matter in a newspaper form. The Press has, by the late change in the law, acquired freedom rather than cheapness, and of the benefits of this change the writers and proprietors of the SATURDAY REVIEW desire to avail themselves. They do not come before the public as purveyors of news. The news market is more than sufficiently supplied. The Daily Journals, whether well or ill—whether or not, in some quarters, with enough of moral principle, or in others with adequate intellectual power—do undoubtedly give all readers enough of facts, and even more than enough of crude and ill-considered comments. With the Daily Newspaper Press the SATURDAY REVIEW therefore proposes to enter into no competition or rivalry.

And as regards the Weekly Newspaper Press, the SATURDAY REVIEW has marked out for itself a field of action very different from that covered by any existing publication. The Weekly Newspaper, whether sectional or general, aims at giving a digest of all the news of the week, together with

comments in the shape of leading articles, which, from the nature of the case, must be few in number, and either partial or perfunctory in scope. What the SATURDAY REVIEW proposes is, to make its specialty consist in leading articles and other original matter. It will give no news whatever, except in the way of illustrative documents and such facts as may be required to make its comments and criticism intelligible. It will assume in all its readers a sufficient acquaintance with the current history of the week, gathered from the daily journals. The SATURDAY REVIEW will therefore consist entirely of leading articles, reviews, comments, and criticisms on the various Parliamentary, Social, and Literary events and topics of the day. With such aims, the SATURDAY REVIEW will, it is hoped, as distinguished from a daily newspaper, possess opportunities for more measured statement and more deliberate thought, while its comparative frequency of publication will enable it to occupy a position, in the way of direct and immediate usefulness, which periodicals published at the rare intervals of one month or three months, necessarily fail to maintain. And, as compared with the ordinary weekly newspaper, the SATURDAY REVIEW will be distinguished, as we have said, by consisting altogether of original matter.

In a word, the SATURDAY REVIEW desires to establish an independent position, neither rivalling its weekly, nor copying from its daily contemporaries. The *Revue des Deux Mondes*, published fortnightly, and with so much success, in Paris, may give some notion of our general purpose; though neither in the length of its papers nor in the scantiness of its politics is that able publication to be taken for our model.

The professions of public writers seldom receive much attention, and this, as we have intimated, is on many accounts reasonable. It were easy for the projectors of the SATURDAY REVIEW to profess, in the usual vague and conventional terms, impartiality and independence; but to say this, though true enough in their case, would be to say nothing, because in the existing state of politics and literature a hired writer is impossible, and the mere organ of party or class interests is never listened to except by his own party or class. Neither does the SATURDAY REVIEW affect that impartiality which consists in an indifference to all principles — on the contrary, its writers, most of whom are known to each other, and none of whom

are unpractised in periodical literature, have been thrown together by affinities naturally arising from common habits of thought, education, reflection and social views. Yet they all claim independence of judgment, and in the SATURDAY REVIEW they hope to find an opportunity, within certain limits, for its exercise and expression. They will consequently address themselves to the educated mind of the country, and to serious, thoughtful men of all schools, classes, and principles, not so much in the spirit of party as in the more philosophic attitude of mutual counsel and friendly conflict of opinions. In politics, the SATURDAY REVIEW is independent both of individual statesmen and of worn-out political sections; in literature, science and art, its conductors are entirely free from the influence or dictation of pecuniary or any other connections with trade, party, clique, or section. On subjects of political science, they desire, while respecting public opinion, at the same time to accompany and guide it by an independent and vigilant criticism in every department of current history and events, foreign and domestic, social and economical. Speaking generally, though quite aware that no single phrase can define what, after all, is best left undefined, the writers of the SATURDAY REVIEW claim to be regarded as advocates of liberal and independent opinions. In material and physical science, they hope to connect their Journal, as an organ of current information and discussion, with the chief scientific Societies, while in general literature and art they have no private interests to serve, nor any objects to further, save such as are indicated by a desire to maintain learning, refinement and scholarship in letters, and reality and purity in the fine arts. To the progress of foreign literature and art they hope to devote more space than English journalism has hitherto given to these important subjects.

The Editor and writers of the proposed SATURDAY REVIEW are aware that their aim is high, and consequently that their pretensions may be considered ambitious. For such an imputation they are, however, fully prepared. They desire to be judged by their journal itself, rather than by professions which can but very inadequately describe their hopes and objects. They recognise to the full the serious obligations of all who, in these difficult times, seek to influence the thoughts of active and reflecting men; and they do not feel that it is a necessity of journalism, though it is too much its present character, either, on the one hand, to yield to the hasty judgment of first impressions, and to pander to ignorance and prejudice, or on the other, to deny to public opinion its legitimate power. The mere fact that the SATURDAY REVIEW is contemplated is a sufficient proof that its conductors are scarcely satisfied with newspaper writing as it actually exists, either in its moral or in its critical aspects; but whether their periodical will prove a popular innovation on English journalism must depend on causes which they can only partially control. They appeal, however, with hope and confidence, to public support, assured that earnestness, sincerity and independence of thought and conduct, can never plead in vain to the educated and reflective mind of this country.

March 22, 1856

A NEWSPAPER FOR A PENNY

IN the present week, an experiment of great novelty and interest has been tried. For the first time, a first-class metropolitan morning newspaper has been issued to the public at a penny. Two sham representatives of this form of journalism have, it is true, been thrust for some time past into the faces of Londoners at the doors of cabs and omnibuses; but one of these has been a scarcely disguised reprint of yesterday's news, while the other is merely an abridged copy of a decaying high-priced journal. The *Morning Star* is, however, a newspaper which seeks to rival the *Times*, the *Daily News* and the *Morning Herald*, in respect of correspondence and intelligence; and it avowedly aspires to rank with the first of its contemporaries in the quality, though not in the length, of its leading articles. So far as we can judge, it really attempts to keep abreast of its more expensive rivals in the freshness, accuracy, and genuineness of its despatches; and there is no want of ability of a presentable sort in its brief comments on affairs of public and political moment. On this last point, however, it would be premature to praise or condemn it, as the skill and knowledge of a staff of writers cannot be tested in one week, or, indeed, in half-a-dozen weeks. We will only say that no amount of systematised information can be too great, and no degree of literary tact too high, to be worth securing by the projectors of the *Morning Star*. Ever since knowledge ceased to be valued except for its adaptability to life and men—ever since the excellence of writing came to consist, not in balanced periods and exotic words, but in clearness, terseness, and point—great knowledge and good writing are the best instruments of success even with the humblest class of readers.

It was perhaps to be expected that the *Morning Star* should disclose a bias towards ultra-liberal politics. It necessarily depends for a sale so extensive as to be remunerative on its popularity with a part of society which still repeats the watchwords of the old Radical party, and still maintains the expediency of the measures which JOSEPH HUME contended for in the years succeeding the Reform Bill. The Ballot, if carried at the present moment, would probably be altogether inoperative—certainly it would disappoint the expectations of its advocates; but still there is undoubtedly a large section of the middle class which would repudiate, as a tool of corruption, a journal which opposed the Ballot. We have ceased, however, to believe in the technical language of any particular party as a guarantee either of stability or of improvement. When Lord DERBY and Mr. DISRAELI came into power,

they announced the restraint of democracy as the first article of their programme; and yet England has not for centuries seen any demagoguism more frantic than that recommended and practised by their especial journal since their expulsion from office. We are not therefore bound to regard a Radical journal—and we are not yet able to pronounce decisively that the *Morning Star* is a Radical journal—as necessarily destructive. Indeed, we have some security against its advocacy of a vulgar Radicalism, if the report be true which attributes to Mr. BRIGHT a close interest in its fortunes. During our own brief existence, we have perhaps differed more frequently from Mr. BRIGHT than from any other contemporary politician; but we should reckon it a small compliment to our sagacity if we were supposed to associate Mr. BRIGHT with the ruck of ordinary Radicals. He has principles, and on the logical consequences of those principles, he acts with rigid conscientiousness. If he makes mistakes it is because deficient experience blinds him to some of the grounds of political action, and makes him attach an undue importance to others. No type of human character can be more distinct than his from that of the commonplace Reform Club politician, bending like the willow before the breath of popular feeling, uninquisitive how or when it was formed—ignorant how or when it should be checked—utterly careless whence it cometh or whither it goeth.

One of the declared objects of the new journal is to mitigate the despotism of the London daily newspaper which is at present circulated most widely. Certain conditions of success may be wanting to the *Morning Star*; but, whether it succeeds or fails, we are convinced that a cheap press will ultimately be the means of fastening an effectual responsibility on the *Times*. The attempt to rival the Leading Journal has been made more than once. It has been equalled in literary force, and outstripped in intelligence. But the experiment has failed from a variety of causes, of which the dearness of the competing newspaper has always been the foremost. No daily journal, whatever be its price or merit, can hope, for a long while, to be able to contend with the tenacious habits of the reading public, and to exclude the *Times* from the households of which it is now the exclusive oracle. A few stern moralists or strong politicians may give up the great newspaper for one or other of its contemporaries; but most men will naturally dislike taking a step which has the effect of shutting them out from the atmosphere of opinion in which half England lives. The only chance which remains to a competitor of the *Times* is to be read by its side. But to a newspaper of the older sort this chance amounts to nothing. Even a wealthy man will hesitate before he takes in two daily prints of full size and price. A journal moderate in compass, and sold for a sum which almost everybody will be ready to pay without a second thought, is the only one which can expect to follow the *Times* into all the ramifications of its circulation of Sixty Thousand.

We would not be understood to wish that the *Times* should lose a single subscriber. But we deem it of the first importance that it should not

continue for many years longer the sole medium of political thought to the immense majority of the British public. No apology for a free press has ever been framed which contemplated this overshadowing supremacy of a single newspaper. Many palpable inconveniences attend the liberty of unlicensed printing, but it has always been thought that they were fewer and slighter than the inconveniences of an uncontrolled Executive. We are living, however, under a *régime* in which most of the inconveniences of a free press are united to most of the inconveniences of a despotic government. We are governed absolutely, without enjoying even that feeble security against wrong which is afforded by the sense of individual responsibility in a single despot; nor is the yoke the less galling on account of the spiritual and immaterial character of the agencies employed, or because the English nation submits itself, not to the strong man armed, but to sophistries, half-truths and all the artifices of a declamatory rhetoric. If, indeed, the complete irresponsibility of the ruling newspaper were the same thing as complete independence, we might be more contented with our lot. But, in fact, it is ridiculous to call a newspaper like the *Times* independent. The *Times* has attempted many definitions of itself, but, like the metaphysical definitions of a pound which vanished before the little coin that Sir ROBERT PEEL balanced on the tip of his finger, all these subtleties are dissipated by the simple truth that the *Times* is a great commercial speculation. Within the limits implied by this description, the *Times* is just, generous, patient, loyal, and public-spirited. Consistently with giving a handsome profit to its proprietors and to the persons interested in its printing contracts, there is no virtue which it is not ready to practise. But the boundaries of the disinterestedness permitted to it are never overstepped; not a line is ever printed which compromises its chance of obtaining the maximum of popularity with the greatest possible number of readers; and the result is, that we are governed by a sort of impersonal and impalpable demagogue—a CLEON, incapable of being travestied—a WAT TYLER, without a head to be broken. The stock-in-trade of the firm consists of "sensations." Bright reputations are ruthlessly sacrificed to get a dividend out of the gross curiosity with which the herd regards the baiting of the great in rank, fortune, or name; and the issue of a whole campaign is jeopardised rather than forego the proceeds of catering for sixty thousand greedy *gobemouches* with "interesting" intelligence from the seat of war. But the vicious morality which it is compelled to prescribe to itself is better illustrated by pointing to what the *Times* has not done than by indicating what it has done. To those who recollect how much of the good of our nature is exclusively called out by fellowship in public or private adversity, it is a startling reflection that, during the ten years for which it has reigned uncontrolled over English opinion, this great newspaper has never once defended an unpopular man, or succoured an unpopular cause.

It is needless to accompany our censures of the *Times* with compliments to its ability which are implied in the censures themselves. But, as we

have said that we look with the utmost confidence for the ultimate success of the cheap press, it would be sovereign injustice not to add that we owe to the *Times* the high standard which must be proposed to itself by every newspaper, dear or cheap, that aims at a very extensive circulation. From the penny journalism of America the *Times* has saved us. A newspaper which feels that it must perish unless its copies sell by tens of thousands, will naturally take for its model, not the vulgarity of the *Daily News* or the imbecility of the *Morning Herald*, but the power, seldom exchanged for false energy, and the knowledge, only occasionally deficient through carelessness, of the triumphant *Leading Journal*. The *Times*, in truth, was the first English newspaper which secured the services of writers possessing the skill, the tastes, the sympathies, and the information of thoroughly educated gentlemen; and it was precisely the prodigious success of this experiment which raised the Great Journal to a solitary pinnacle of circulation at which the rarefaction of its responsibilities has gone to a pernicious extreme. If the conductors of the *Times* can be made to feel that their sophistries will be unravelled, their unfairnesses corrected, and their cynicism denounced, not by a few narrow observers in London, but by a contemporary treading on their heels through all the windings of English society, we anticipate that the same wit and wisdom which their sheets disclose at the present moment will be found pressed into the service of a far loftier morality.

October 17, 1903

LA RENTRÉE.

TWO years ago, at the same season and under this same inscription of "La Rentrée", I attempted to describe the state of those Parisians, who, after a month or so in the country or by the sea, once again found themselves restored to their dear city. Heavens, their emotion, their confusion! At the Octroi, confusion; in the cab, confusion; at home, confusion; and all over Paris the eternal greeting "Tiens, tu es de retour!" and "Rentrée, rentrée, rentrée". One might have returned from a long, tempestuous journey: les Indes, la Chine. One might not have seen a boulevard, a café, a camelot for years and years: only temples, bazaars, black or sallow people. Said many a Parisian—"Have I changed?" But why should he have changed? Impossible to age considerably in a month, save through sickness or sorrow. And the Parisian had known neither: never had the Parisian slept so well, eaten so well, enjoyed such calm, such—. No matter! Said the Parisian: "Have I changed?" Back, usually, came the reply: "No, not much—I

should have recognised you. And I, have I changed?" And off went the Parisian to see if Paris herself had changed, and, as often as not, he returned with the vague impression, "Il me semble, tout de même, qu'il y a quelque chose de changé". However, the opera had not vanished and Notre Dame might still be admired; and still was the Nationalist protesting, "Monsieur, je suis pour la patrie", and still was there an *Affair* (at the Comédie Française), and still were there Bohemians in the Latin Quarter, and Apaches on the exterior boulevards, and trim little modistes in the Rue de la Paix, and bookworms on the quays, and madmen at Montmartre. It was, in short, the old, old Paris: the most exhilarating, the most amazing city in the universe.

And so, because Paris is exhilarating, is amazing, the bourgeois like the boulevardier, the bourgeoisie like the demi-mondaine, is agitated at the moment of the "rentrée". At last, the boulevards; at last, the Champs Elysées: at last, the Seine! Entirely do I understand and appreciate these emotions: even have I shared them, first, two years ago after the usual summer holiday, and now, this very day, after having been absent a whole twelvemonth. True, I do not inquire, "Have I changed?" But, like any Parisian, I have hurried hither and thither, in quest of changes; and no changes can I discover. Everywhere, flags; but how many times a year does the Parisian put forth flags? Nothing new about those flags; and nothing new about the illuminations, the balls at street-corners, the toys and songs and "patter" of the camelots, although all this, and much more, is in honour of the King and Queen of Italy. The Tsar was "Nicholas"; well, the King of Italy is "Victor". The camelot's most popular picture postcard a few months ago portrayed King Edward, M. Loubet, and M. Delcassé blithely dancing the cake-walk; well, to-day M. Loubet and M. Delcassé have "Victor" as partner in the cake-walk. And one cries "Vive le Roi"; and one throngs the boulevards and the Avenue de l'Opéra in hundreds of thousands, and, as ever, one is polite and considerate and amiable, as befits the most civilised, the most amazing nation in the universe. At the most, in this café, a change in the matter of waiters; but there sits my indignant Nationalist, reading the "Patrie", and as he reads he frowns and he grunts. And he grunts when he sees me, but is courteous enough to ask where I have been all this time. "Studying your frontiers", I reply. "Ah", he cries, "the Government does not mind, the Government would sell France to her enemies to-morrow, the Government consists of traitors, of swindlers, of brigands". Then my Nationalist asks me how long I have been away, and when I tell him "a year", he flatly contradicts me. "No," he cries, "it is not; impossible! You have been away six months at the most". A year, I repeat; but my Nationalist, who makes a point of denying everything, insists that he saw me six months ago, that he spoke to me, that he even informed me of the latest plot of the Government to "sell" France. "Il y a un an", I

persist. "Bien," shouts my Nationalist, "a year, if you like. Five years, ten years, if you like. But I, Jules Golondeau, Nationalist and patriot, saw you here, in this café, six months ago, and we spoke of your infamous Chamberlain, and your infamous war—" "That", I politely interrupt, "was at least four years ago". And then my Nationalist flushes and thumps his fist on the table and exclaims with heat, "Assez, j'en ai assez. Je n'ai qu'une chose à vous dire: il y a six mois et pas un jour de plus!" Now does "Il y a un an" become my stock phrase, but most of my old acquaintances and friends would persuade me that "il y a sept mois" or "neuf mois" or "onze mois juste". For instance, the kind Théo de Bellefond, late proprietor of the Café Procope, who has become a politician, an orator. He votes for eight months. "I saw you", he explains, "on the eve of a great meeting, eight months ago". But I do not contradict the kind, the ever-delightful Théo de Bellefond: rather do I inquire with infinite concern after his "campaign". And Théo de Bellefond is still a politician, an orator: still does he hasten from meeting to meeting still does he mount platforms, still does he cry in clarion tones, "Citoyens!" Moreover, next May, at the time of the municipal elections, he will be working on behalf of many a candidate. "They need me", he explains, "and I shall not fail them. If necessary, I will attend three, four, five meetings a night". Dreadful to be opposed by Théo de Bellefond! Does he not accomplish the work of a dozen orators? Think—he makes three, four, five fiery speeches a night! You are exposed in five different quarters of Paris in as many hours. Your name is greeted with groans by five vast audiences between dinner and supper. Your — "Tiens", says a languid voice, "tiens, vous voilà de retour. Il y a bien sept ou huit mois que—" "Il y a un an", I reply dully, monotonously; but even the languid Georges Millandy—pale, frail, melancholy, poet of "mists and half-moons, dead leaves and lost illusions"—will not allow that "there is a year". No, seven or eight months Georges Millandy wrote a certain chanson frêle: so "he ought to remember". The same Georges Millandy: still protesting against the irony of life and the cruelty of the blonde and the brune and the rousse. Everywhere those ironies, that cruelty. Towns, hamlets, fishing villages, all the same. And Georges Millandy rolls his eyes, and Georges Millandy sighs, and Georges Millandy vows that life is tragic and bitter and altogether heart-breaking. "You should occupy yourself with politics", says Théo de Bellefond. "Politics", replies the poet, "are disgusting". "Go and see the King of Italy then", suggests Théo de Bellefond. "Kings", declares the poet, "do not interest me". An iced crème de menthe for the frail Georges Millandy, which the proprietor brings with his own hands. "Tenez, tenez" he exclaims, "voilà bien neuf mois—" "Il y a un an" I reply, always dully. "Mais non", says the proprietor, "mais non, ce n'est pas possible. Dix mois, si vous voulez; mais un an, non". And

Théo de Bellefond and Georges Millandy support the proprietor, support him firmly and elaborately until up comes a mutual friend to confuse and depress them with the cry, "Mais je vous croyais mort! Voilà bien quatre ans que—" "No", I protest with pain, "one year, not four". But the friend is obdurate; the friend declares: "Quatre ans, au moins. Oui, quatre ans, si ce n'est pas quatre ans et demi".

Truly, a "rentrée"! Apparently, I may have no opinion, no memory of my own; and depressing in the extreme is my interview with a late femme de ménage, whose son I was called upon to admire a twelvemonth ago. Says the lady, "You would not recognise him. He has grown much in the last two years". Say I firmly: "But I saw him last October, when you brought him round to my rooms". However, I am wrong, have forgotten, perhaps I even dream. And I must hear all about Maurice; hear the same old stories of a year ago. And I must also hear that Maurice is tall and that Maurice is strong and that Maurice wears high collars and that Maurice smokes and that Maurice's moustache is beginning to dawn: all of which I perceived for myself in the early days of October 1902. Worse still, a newspaper bill that runs: 28 Octobre—28 Novembre. "But", I protest, "I was away, far away. I was in England. How, then, could I have had newspapers from you?" However, I am mistaken, I am confused, perhaps I have been ill. See, there is my name in the book, and beneath it are the names of the journals. Another proof: well does the newsagent remember me congratulating Madame on her birthday, which happy event takes place on November the 10th. So, the thing is clear; and this being so, the bill must be met. Puzzled, weary, and dejected, I go forth into the street; and there I meet an old man with a grievance, which he wished me to lay bare in the Paris newspapers three hundred and sixty-five days ago. But it is "an eternity" since he has seen me, and as I must have forgotten his woe he unfolds it again. And he begins: "It was in January 1891—" "No", interrupts his wife, "it was in the summer of 1893". "So far as I can remember" I remonstrate, "you told me that it was on the very day of the arrest of Captain Dreyfus, which was in 1895". So, the old man goes in quest of papers, and as he does not reappear I bid Madame au revoir, and promise shortly to return. Now, the garrulous blanchisseuse, whom I avoid; next, a concierge, from whom I fly; and finally a postman, who, however runs after me with the cry, "Monsieur, Monsieur". Full of compliments and good wishes is my postman; then come the eternal question and my eternal reply. But the postman is not satisfied, the postman would speak, the postman is about to object, when, fixing him steadily with my eye, I announce distinctly, sternly and relentlessly:

"Il y a un an.

Il y a douze mois.

Il y a trois cent soixante-cinq jours."

JOHN F. MACDONALD.

Round the Empire

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE

"**E**ITHER national service—the training and shaping of Australian manhood to defend this country—must be re-introduced," says the *Sydney Bulletin*, "or for all the £43,000,000 to be spent—and, for a beginning, £10,000,000 is to be borrowed—Australia will be no more adequately defended three years hence than it is to-day. . . . Our politicians cannot face this issue. Mr. Curtin feels secure in his political dream of 'planes beating off any aggressor; Mr. Lyons, tied to his vote-chasing pronouncement against national service, feels complacently satisfied in bringing forward a defence scheme which in other respects is welcome enough. As to the men who would have to do the fighting, Mr. Curtin says nothing at all. Mr. Lyons's conception is summed up in one phrase from his defence plans: 'Extension of the annual training from 12 to 13 days.' Nothing could be plainer than that the bulk of the men who would be called upon to do the bulk of the fighting would be the rawest recruits. They would be the most tragic sort of cannon-fodder. Untrained, they would be rushed into it like stock to the slaughter; and politicians, adept at blaming anybody but themselves, would ask what had happened to the grand old Anzac spirit.

"It is questionable whether too much is not being made of that fine quality. The Anzacs have become our greatest tradition, and such a tradition is a good thing to have about the place. But it is not a good thing to forget that the Anzacs needed the best part of six months' intensive training to put them into fighting shape, and even then went on to Gallipoli raw troops. At that they were well equipped for the job they did compared with what would be the state of the bulk of the fighting men that would be called upon to defend this country against any invasion. It is very well to feel that Australians are great natural fighters—they and Maorilanders undoubtedly are that—but it would be a shameful herding to the slaughter to send them untrained against trained troops."

In another particular the *Bulletin* finds reason for grave dissatisfaction over Australian Defence arrangements, and that is in regard to the condition of the Royal Australian Air Force's machines. At the recent Air Force Display at Richmond (N.S.W.), it complains, at least two-thirds of the machines were obsolete and the rest obsolescent. "It is safe to say that in the British, German, French, Italian and U.S.A. front-line services few strutted biplanes, no fabric-body machines and no craft with top speeds of less than 230 miles per hour exist. Modern air navies go in for all-metal streamlined monoplanes, with the multiple-engined machine and the medium-to-heavy bomber as the staple. The fighters are ultra-fast, short-distance machines. In the R.A.A.F. there is no 'plane, fighter or otherwise, which approaches nearer than within 20 m.p.h. of the minimum first-rank speeds of European and U.S.A. air forces.

The bulk of our front-line fighters are partly fabric biplanes, well hung with struts and landing wires. Only a handful of Avro Ansons have two engines. The only machines capable of speeds above 200 m.p.h. are the new and tiny short-range NA16's—a type evolved in 1935. The fastest British machines could give our fastest machines 40 per cent. start and come in ahead. To the Hawker Demons a normal British fighter could give well over 50 per cent. start and a beating. Our Australian machines have old-fashioned non-chemical cooling systems. Most of them were never built for the high-altitude work which is a feature of modern air fighting. The older ones are not only slow to fly but slow in manoeuvre, and they lack the amplitude of fighting field which distinguishes the clean-lined modern low-wing monoplane. Many are without direction-finding apparatus, and some cannot stand up to moderately-rough weather conditions.

"Public interest in aerial development is universal in Australia. It has compelled new standards in civil aviation, with the result that the capitals are now served with air-lines which, in speed and comfort and safety, are equal to those anywhere in the world. Only on routes in which the Government has a substantial interest do slow machines linger. Most of the modern inter-capital mail and passenger machines are convertible into bombers and heavy fighters. There is not a machine in the R.A.A.F. which could catch the fastest of them; scarcely one which could catch the slowest of them, or meet it on equal terms under rough-weather conditions or at a high altitude. Only the Avro Ansons would have a chance with some of them fully armed. To the slowest machines in the R.A.A.F., the new 14-passenger Lockheeds for the Darwin run could concede an 80 m.p.h. handicap in a race. Weight of public opinion on aerial matters should be concentrated on the R.A.A.F. to give the fine human material which it contains a chance to turn it into a modern and effective defensive unit."

NATIONAL INSURANCE SCHEME

Social benefits for 3,600,000 people, or more than half the population of Australia, are included in the two National Health and Pensions Insurance Bills introduced in the Commonwealth House of Representatives by the Federal Treasurer (Mr. Casey). "The most far-reaching plan of social reform that has been presented to the Federal Parliament," was the description given by Mr. Casey to this legislation. Early criticism was made by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Curtin), who, even before the first Bill was introduced into the House, made an unsuccessful effort to have its scope extended to the unemployed and to small farmers and business men.

The Bills introduce a compulsory contributory plan of national health and pensions insurance. About 1,850,000 wage-earners and their employers will contribute weekly to the plan. Sickness and pension payments will be received by these wage-earners, who, with their dependants, are estimated to comprise 52 per cent. of the population of Australia. Benefits are divided into two classes—

those payable when the wage-earner is sick or disabled; and those payable when he is aged, or, in the event of his death, any pension due to his widow and orphans.

NEW GUINEA CAPITAL

Alternative sites for a new capital of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea are under review by the expert committee appointed by the Commonwealth Ministry to advise on the removal of the capital from Rabaul, which has been pronounced untenable because of the possibility of further volcanic disturbances. It is understood that projects being considered are the transfer of the capital to the mainland and the construction of a new administrative city on the highlands near Salamaua.

The proposal, which is understood to have been strongly pressed by the New Guinea Administration, is the transfer of the main part of the residential section of Rabaul, with public offices and some private offices, to Bitapaku, about 25 miles from Rabaul. This is the site of an old German settlement, is situated on high ground beyond the danger zone and is sufficiently close to Rabaul to enable the splendid harbour there to be retained. The selection of Bitapaku would also avoid the necessity for abandoning capital invested in buildings at Rabaul.

WET OR DRY?

The electors of Victoria will be asked on October 8 to vote at the second eight-yearly liquor licensing poll on the simple question, "That licences shall be abolished." Preparations for the poll are now well in hand. The last poll was held in 1930, when 95 per cent. of the electorate voted. The result was: For Abolition, 418,902; Against, 552,339.

A vote in favour of abolition of licences would not be effective unless there was a three-fifths majority in favour of it. This year the poll will apply to the State as a whole. Even if individual licensing districts recorded the statutory majority in favour of abolition, licences in those districts would not be affected unless the whole State voted "dry."

BY HIGHWAY TO THE ARCTIC

They are planning to build the world's longest highway in the United States and Canada. Recently the Premier of British Columbia went to Washington to have a talk with the United States Secretary for the Interior to discuss plans already on paper to construct the road which, when complete, will traverse America and the Dominion from Fairbanks in Alaska through Yukon, British Columbia and down to the southern border of the United States. In Canada alone a further 1,000 miles of new roads will be required. The work, it is estimated, will keep 5,000 men busy for five years. There will thus be a highway counterpart for the 3,000 miles of undefended boundary which separates these two peaceful communities.

TIMBER WHICH LASTS

From time to time data is brought to light concerning the durability of Canadian timber. It is already well-known that the British Columbia product will repel certain types of fungi, and that it will endure years of immersion in the sea. Blocks of the timber have also withstood the traffic of the city of London for many years. Recently some of the pioneer houses in New Westminster, British Columbia, were being pulled down, and although these were built over fifty years ago the fir studding and siding were discovered to be free from any deterioration, and as good as when they first came from the old Royal Cutting Mills in 1888.

MILLIONS FROM TOURISTS

It has been computed that the Dominion of Canada's net surplus from the flux and flow of tourists' money during last year was well over £34,000,000. This is by far the highest reached since 1929, the peak year, when the total was over £37,000,000. Naturally enough, the bulk of the tourists came from the United States. Travellers from that country who came by rail, steamer, ferry, aeroplane, bus and motor car spent between them £20,000,000. A significant point which speaks for itself is that in 1936 the average amount spent per car was a little over £3, while last year it was almost £4. By Provinces Ontario was in the lead, and received over £23,000,000. Travellers spent over £7,000,000 in Quebec; the Maritime Provinces accounted for £2,500,000, British Columbia for a like amount, Manitoba for £500,000, Saskatchewan for £190,000, and last, but not least, Alberta for £223,000. The preponderance of National Parks in Western Canada and the increasing facilities for travel will undoubtedly help to adjust the balance as between Eastern and Western Canada.

AIR DEVELOPMENTS

An interesting example of air speed has just been provided in connection with the South Africa-England flying mail. Just before the Imperial flying-boat from Durban, homeward-bound for England, had reached Lindi on its flight up the East African coast, a wireless message reached the Lindi air-port from the cruiser *Emerald*, then at a point some distance out to sea. This message asked whether, if mails for England from the *Emerald* were sent in immediately by a seaplane catapulted from the cruiser, they would be in time to catch the flying-boat at Lindi. The answer being in the affirmative, the seaplane was launched at once and flown to Lindi. Here it arrived just in time for the mails it carried to be transferred to the flying-boat before the latter left on its stage farther up the coast; with the result that the mails were in London just over four days later.

The other day one of the senior pilots of Imperial Airways, Captain Dudley Travers, completed 22 years of flying. During that period he has flown one-and-a-quarter million miles. Captain Travers started flying when he was nineteen, as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps. After distinguished war

service he became a commercial pilot, joining Imperial Airways in 1926; and when in 1927 the Company established a mail and passenger route between Cairo and Basra, Captain Travers was at the controls of the air-liner which inaugurated this pioneer commercial Empire air service.

A party of medical experts, including representatives of the Ministry of Health, made a flight in the *Capella* at Hythe recently to witness a demonstration in the employment of the insect-destroying apparatus evolved by Imperial Airways, in consultation with various technicians, for the destruction of insect-pests when aircraft are operating in tropical countries. To render the test convincing, the London School of Hygiene had provided cages containing several hundred live tropical mosquitoes. While the flying-boat was aloft the apparatus was brought into successful use, spraying the whole of the interior of the aircraft with a special non-inflammable insecticide. This had the effect of killing all the mosquitoes, without in any way inconveniencing the passengers in the aircraft, or causing any damage to upholstery or fittings.

Urgently-consigned for a State banquet given by King Farouk of Egypt to celebrate the betrothal of his 17-year-old sister, Princess Fawzia, to the Crown Prince of Iran, many special items for the menu were air-borne from Southampton to Alexandria in the Imperial flying-boat *Calypso*, including caviare, salmon-trout, lobsters, grapes, peaches and pineapples.

NAZIS IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

Nazi propaganda, ubiquitous and all-pervasive, is, according to the *Cape Times*, turning its attention with redoubled zeal to South-West Africa. The Union Government's Proclamation of April, 1937, it says, put a curb on an agitation which had been denounced by the South-West Africa Commission as an alien and profoundly disturbing interference in the internal affairs of the Territory. "But no one who has the least acquaintance with the technique of German propaganda is so naive as to imagine that the mere prohibition of organised political activity on the part of those inhabitants who had not accepted the obligations of Union nationality would be enough. German propaganda has not been extirpated: it has merely been driven underground."

In making these statements the *Cape Times* drew attention to rumours which spoke of a projected visit to South-West Africa in June of 2,000 Germans in a ship of the Nazi Strength Through Joy movement. It pointed to the agitation these rumours had already aroused. At a recent congress of the United Party at Windhoek it was, it said, made clear that if such a visit took place, it would have a most disturbing effect on the Afrikaner population of the Territory. Speakers went so far as to say that farmers of the platteland were preparing to band themselves into commandos to hold demonstrations in Windhoek against the landing of the Nazi tourists. If this were to happen, said the *Cape Times*, it might easily result in an unpleasant "incident"; and the world has enough of "incidents" at the

moment without having another forced upon its attention by an example of Nazi "tactlessness" in South-West Africa.

The *Cape Times* then went on to say: "Even if this rather ludicrous pilgrimage is averted, the Union Government will have much to concern itself with in the progress of Nazi propaganda in the Territory under its administration. In 1936, out of a total of 1,174 arrivals, no fewer than 1,011 were German in origin. Of these, 183 were coming to settle, and 679 returning from abroad (almost certainly from a course of Nazi indoctrination in Germany). There is nothing in the mandate to stop this very considerable immigration; but it is the duty of the Government to take firm steps to ensure that, once in the Territory, these immigrants must be made to obey its laws."

RHODESIAS-NYASALAND UNION

The Royal Commission which is investigating the possibilities of closer association of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland has already had a good many contradictory points of view presented to it, even if the greater part of the evidence seems to be in favour of some form of union. One of its most recent witnesses, Mr. Douglas Abrahamson, Chairman of the Greater South Africa League, said that his League, which had several thousand members in the Rhodesias, was working for the amalgamation of all British territories from the Union of South Africa up to and including Tanganyika in one Dominion, possibly starting as a federation. The recent elections in the Union, he said, had brought the time much nearer when this would be possible. The results had shown that the Republican Party in the Union had not gained ground.

Lord Bledisloe, chairman of the Commission, asked if there might not be advantages in forming a British bloc in South Central Africa before attempting to combine with the Union in a still larger British bloc. Mr. Abrahamson replied that it would be exceedingly dangerous to have two big British States alongside one another with jealousies and conflicts arising between them. This scheme for amalgamation with the Union, he contended, was even more popular in Northern than in Southern Rhodesia for defence reasons. If given the choice, he continued, Southern Rhodesia would undoubtedly choose the Union, with its markets, its capital for development purposes, and its comparatively large European population. Northern Rhodesia was in such a position that it could not support a much larger white population without being unfair to the natives.

Lord Bledisloe asked if Mr. Abrahamson could favour the Union, which would result in a preponderance of Afrikaans-speaking people. Mr. Abrahamson replied that whether a man was English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking, he was a British South African, provided he had British sympathies. Bilingualism was a matter that could be arranged. Lord Bledisloe mentioned the claim—apparently well founded, he said—that Southern Rhodesia treated its natives better than any other African Government. Mr. Abrahamson replied

that if Rhodesia had Dominion status it would fall into line with the Union's native policy completely. He added that under amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia would lose her Union markets.

Lord Bledisloe welcomed another witness, Mr. J. M. Moubray, as one with knowledge of both the Rhodesias and of their mineral potentialities. Mr. Moubray, who gave evidence as a private citizen, said he was totally opposed to amalgamation. Lord Bledisloe: With the Union?—"No. This generation would never amalgamate with the Union, and I do not think that the next generation will do so. But when we ultimately have a generation with no "home" ties the situation will be altered entirely." Southern Rhodesia, he said, should develop her own assets.

At another session of the Commission, representatives of the Southern Rhodesian Conference of Christian Natives opposed the political amalgamation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland on the ground that Southern Rhodesian native education would have to mark time until the standard of education rose in the more backward north. The chairman of the Commission, Lord Bledisloe, suggested that Southern Rhodesia would continue to educate natives if amalgamation took place, but witnesses maintained that amalgamation would slow down educational progress in the colony. Discussing the question of the veto of the Imperial Government, native witnesses expressed the opinion that they would have less objection to amalgamation if the veto were retained. Other witnesses put forward the suggestion that natives should be represented in the Parliament by Europeans elected by natives through a system of councils. Some witnesses feared that amalgamation would bring about an influx of northern natives into the colony, breaking up the home life of the tribes and reducing the standard of living in the colony—a standard which they considered was already low enough in some areas.

Representatives of the African Teachers' Association supported amalgamation with the Union of South Africa in preference to amalgamation with the north, as Union markets would then become available to Southern Rhodesia. Furthermore, they argued that in the Union higher education was firmly established. If, however, the Imperial Government's veto was retained and natives could elect European representatives to Parliament, they would not want to amalgamate with the Union. A member of the Commission suggested that native interests in the Colony would be better safeguarded by representatives of natives in Parliament, including the Lower House, and the Imperial Government's veto, than they could be under the system in force in South Africa, and the witnesses admitted that this might be so.

Mr. G. T. Thornicroft, speaking for a delegation representing the Coloured Community of Service League, said they did not want their community to suffer under amalgamation. They were afraid the Commission would go home remembering only natives and Europeans. In the Union the rights of coloured people varied in different provinces, and a similar situation might follow amalgamation.

A native witness representing Gatooma natives said they favoured Union with the South because of better living and educational conditions there. People in the North were primitive and they did not wish to amalgamate with them. At the same time, they would like to know more about native policy in the Union.

INDO-SOUTH AFRICAN PACT

The detailed terms of the preliminary commercial agreement, concluded between the Governments of India and South Africa, have now been published. The agreement came into force from March 29. It will remain in force until superseded by a more comprehensive agreement, for the conclusion of which the two Governments have agreed to enter into negotiations as soon as possible, or until the expiration of three calendar months from the date on which notice of termination shall have been given by either Government to the other.

The terms of the agreement are:—The growth, produce or manufacture of one country, when imported into the other country, shall, in respect of customs duties and other taxes and charges, be treated not less favourably than like articles from any other country, provided that the one Government shall not be entitled to claim the privileges or favours flowing from preferential treatment accorded or to be accorded by the other Government exclusively to any of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, their possessions, Protectorates or Mandated Territories. In the event of either Government establishing a system of licensing or quantitative regulation of imports, such system shall be so administered as not to discriminate against articles of the other country. The conditions under which licences or permits may be issued for the importation of such articles shall be not less favourable than those applied to the articles of any other country.

In the event of either Government establishing or maintaining foreign exchange control, such control shall be administered so as to ensure that the commerce of the other country will be granted a fair and equitable share in the allotment of foreign exchange. The most-favoured-nation treatment provided for shall apply also to taxes or charges levied in connection with the internal distribution and sale of imported articles. Either of the two Governments may prohibit or restrict the import of any articles by the imposition of special duties or otherwise, provided that no such prohibition shall be imposed on the articles of the other country, unless such prohibition is imposed on like articles from any other country in regard to which like grounds for the application of such measures exist.

The provisions of this agreement shall not extend to favours actually granted or which may hereafter be granted by South Africa to any State or territory adjoining the Union. It is understood that wherever the term "Union of South Africa" is used in the present agreement, it shall be deemed to include the Mandated Territory of South-West Africa.